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PP RUEHDBU
DE RUEHNT #1605 2551044
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 121044Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8438
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 9422
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 3250
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 3864
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 3728
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV 0012
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 7143
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2034
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0794

C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 001605

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/12/2017

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [PGOV](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: PENTECOSTAL PASTOR FLEES TO KIEV; SEEKS ASYLUM

REF: TASHKENT 1301

Classified By: CDA BRAD HANSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D).

11. (C) On September 7, poloff received an email from Pentecostal Pastor Bakhtiyor Tuychiev, an Embassy contact from Andijon, explaining that he had left Uzbekistan and is currently seeking political refugee status from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Kiev, Ukraine. Tuychiev said that his interview with the UNHCR is scheduled for September 27. Tuychiev requested from poloff a letter attesting to our knowledge of his situation. Tuychiev added that he already received such a letter from the British Embassy in Tashkent.

12. (C) Pastor Tuychiev has been a reliable Embassy contact on religious freedom issues for several years and has long shared information with poloffs regarding the harassment he and other Protestants have faced in Andijon. His church, which opened in 1996, used to have approximately one hundred members, but ceased activities in 2007 due to continued pressure from authorities and local residents. After Dmitry Shestakov, another Pentecostal pastor from Andijon, was sentenced in March to four years imprisonment for promoting religious extremism, Tuychiev told poloff that he was the last remaining Protestant pastor in Andijon and was afraid that he might suffer the same fate. Tuychiev told poloff in June that he had closed his church and sold his house in Andijon and was staying in an apartment in Tashkent until he could leave Uzbekistan to request asylum in a third country (ref A). According to Tuychiev's email, his family is still in Uzbekistan, and it is unclear how he intends to get them out.

13. (C) Comment: While we expect Tuychiev will be granted refugee status by the UNHCR even without a letter from Post, we will work with PRM to provide an appropriately worded letter. End comment.

HANSON